LOWER WILLAMETTE GROUP

Chairperson: Bob Wyatt, NW Natural
Treasurer: Fred Wolf, Legacy Site Services for Arkema

February 18, 2010

Chip Humphrey
Eric Blischke
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

Re: EPA Response on PCB Modeling Approach – Contaminant Fate and Transport Model (Lower Willamette River, Portland Harbor Superfund Site, USEPA Docket No: CERCLA-10-2001-0240)

Chip and Eric:

We are responding to your February 11, 2010 letter regarding PCB Modeling Approach – Contaminant Fate and Transport Model, which was in response to the LWG's memorandum dated January 20, 2010 regarding a proposed total PCB modeling approach for the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The LWG memorandum was in response to EPA's November 24, 2009 contaminant fate and transport modeling approach letter to the LWG, in which EPA commented that the strengths and weaknesses of modeling total PCBs, rather than individual congeners, should be further explored by the LWG.

We appreciate the response stating EPA's decision that the LWG should conduct total PCB modeling. We generally agree with EPA's summary description of the technical methods LWG proposed to address EPA's comments on total PCB modeling.

However, the letter refers to new elements of process for this modeling that were either not previously presented by EPA or were not agreed to by LWG in recent conversations at the February 10, 2010 Portland Harbor Managers Meeting. These include:

1. The letter does not accurately describe the timeline sequence we orally described to EPA. The letter is somewhat unclear, but it appears EPA may be thinking that if the Aroclor homolog relationship does not work, then there will only be a one month delay to the project. As we said several times in the Portland Harbor Managers Meeting, the project will be delayed two months if we explore the potential Aroclor homolog relationship, regardless of the findings. The one caveat LWG provided was that there was a very slight possibility that if the data were really incomprehensible, we might find that out quickly and save a little time (such as two weeks) on the 2 month schedule expansion.

2. The letter calls for a "report" if an Aroclor homolog relationship is established by a specific date (March 31, 2010). We specifically said in the Portland Harbor Managers

Meeting that if EPA requires a report and review process, this will have further impact on the schedule. We proposed an oral update to EPA to prevent further schedule impacts. Taking time to write and obtain internal LWG approval of a report will have some additional impact on the schedule. In addition, submitting a report to EPA will put LWG in the position of having no choice but to wait to conduct further total PCB modeling until after EPA reviews the report. That entire review period will also extend the FS schedule by how ever long EPA takes for the review. If, as you have expressed, EPA is committed to avoiding any further delays to the schedule, we are not clear on why EPA regards such a process as a good path forward.

3. The letter states that EPA has not yet determined that any extension of the schedule is "warranted". We understand that EPA would like more discussion of the timing relationships in the schedules, but that does not alter the fact that by making the decision stated in the letter, EPA is deciding on a two month delay to the project (and even more delay if EPA also continues to require an interim report as discussed above). In general, we do not think it is appropriate for EPA to disregard a schedule addressing EPA's specific requests that was developed by a competent and qualified contractor in the areas of FS reports and fate modeling.

The LWG will proceed with the technical aspects of the total PCB modeling as described in EPA's letter. We hope that the above clarifies the LWG's position with regards to the modeling process and the impacts of EPA's decision on the FS schedule. We look forward to further process discussions with EPA that are focused on minimizing any additional impacts to the FS schedule, particularly as it relates to information exchange on the results of the Aroclor homolog relationship analysis.

Sincerely,

Bob Wyatt

cc: Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
Nez Perce Tribe
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
United States Fish & Wildlife
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
LWG Legal
LWG Repository